



State of Connecticut
HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONN. 06106

Testimony of
State Representative Sean Williams
In Support of Raised Bill Number 5821, "An Act Concerning Distance
Learning," and Raised Bill Number 5867, "An Act Concerning
Vocational Technical Schools."

Before the Education Committee

Good afternoon Chairmen Gaffey and Fleischmann, Ranking Members Hovey and Herlihy, and members of the Education Committee. I am here today to testify in support of Raised Bill Number 5821, "An Act Concerning Distance Learning," and Raised Bill Number 5867, "An Act Concerning Vocational Technical Schools."

On behalf of the House Republican Caucus, I would like to thank the Education Committee for raising these two bills, as they would continue our efforts as a State to provide Connecticut students with important educational opportunities.

First, Bill 5821 dealing with distance learning highlights the important role that the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium plays to our students. Currently, the Consortium offers on-line courses for public school students, but not advanced placement courses. This bill would change that. 5821 adds advanced placement courses to the course offerings, allowing students to take them and earn college credits. This bill would also have local public school districts become a part of the Consortium so that all students will have access to this valuable resource. Very simply, this bill makes it easier for high school students to gain credit for college, which helps to reduce the expense of a college education. I would also encourage the Education Committee to

consider adding language which would open up this opportunity to those of our Connecticut students who are home schooled, or are enrolled in a private school. Expanding this valuable educational opportunity will shed light on several different subject areas, enhancing the educational experience for *all* students.

Next, Bill 5867 addresses the need to have a development officer in all Technical High Schools in Connecticut. The Bill calls for the hiring of a development officer, or to have an existing staff member be dedicated to this position. The development officer's role will be to promote their Technical High School throughout middle schools in the region they serve.

I believe that our technical high schools are gold mines for the state and for students who are skilled in the trades and other areas. Many of the skills learned in technical high schools give these students the foundation to be financially independent for the rest of their lives. These schools provide hands-on, real-world training for so many different skills that we all rely on in our day-to-day lives, including culinary arts, architectural technology, fashion design, and automotive training.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to speak before the Committee today, and ask that the Education Committee pass Raised Bills 5821 and 5867. Please give the full General Assembly the chance to debate this issue and to make these raised bills, which are so important to our students, into laws.

Thank You.